RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at ray@yorksj.ac.uk

1 **A Position Statement on Social Justice, Physical Education and Bullying:**

2 **A Figurational Sociological Perspective**

3 *Mark Mierzwinski, Steven Cock, Philippa Velija*

4 **Abstract**

5 Bullying is increasingly considered to be an important moral, political and social issue within

6 modern society. Academic research on this issue has mostly been examined through a

7 psychological lens, often using questionnaire data to examine and explain the prevalence of

8 different types of bullying. In this position statement, we apply a figurational sociological

9 perspective to examine issues of school-based bullying in physical education. We critically

10 reflect on attempts to position bullying amongst young people as a 'social justice' issue and

11 argue that core figurational principles might potentially help researchers strive towards a

12 more reality-congruent means of conceptualizing the power-relationships that are inherent

13 within bullying. We further maintain that the development of a more detached understanding

14 of issues relating to bullying might provide a more adequate basis to contribute to future

15 ongoing policy development.

16

17 **Key Words:** Bullying, physical education, social justice, figurational sociology

18

19 **Introduction**

20 Data from recent large-scale surveys suggests that between 45-51% of young people

21 experience bullying during their time in UK schools (DitchTheLabel, 2018; Stonewall, 2017).

22 Recent reports also highlight the impact that bullying in schools can have on the mental and

23 physical health of young people and emphasize its lasting effects into adulthood (Brauser,

24 2014; Smith, 2014). Following instances in which children have committed suicide following

25 their experiences as victims of bullying, bereaved parents have also lobbied the government

26   for the introduction of new anti-bullying legislation (Payne & Keenan, 2016). Such concerns

27   appear to be reflected in the recent increase of anti-bullying campaigns in schools (Anti-

28   Bullying Alliance, 2018). In response to concerns about bullying in the UK schools are

29   mandated to have an anti-bullying policy (GOV.UK, 2018).

30   Whilst the prevalence of bullying amongst young people has been increasingly

31   positioned by the government and others as an important moral and political issue (e.g.

32   Department for Education, 2017), there has also been increasing academic debate

33   surrounding the definitional and conceptual issues of what constitutes bullying. Such debates

34   are often based around the close affiliation of bullying to issues such as prejudice,

35   harassment, discrimination and victimization (Volk, Veenstra, & Espelage, 2017). Bullying

36   has also become increasingly difficult to differentiate from 'banter', a form of interaction that

37   is often intended to be more jocular, but can include impolite and offensive language and tone

38   (Nichols, 2018). Recent attempts to define the concept of bullying tend to focus on

39   understanding that such behaviours: (a) involve some elements of goal-orientated aggression;

40   (b) are negative, harmful or injurious to the victim; and (c) can be linked to power-

41   imbalances between those parties involved (Volk, Dane & Marini, 2014).

42   With increasing debate surrounding issues of bullying, some academic researchers

43   have sought to emphasize the 'moral imperative' for action to reduce instances of bullying in

44   schools (Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004, p.1). At times, such issues have also been aligned

45   with a 'social justice' agenda (Polanin & Vera, 2013). Whilst social justice researchers have

46   made important contributions to academic discussions in recent years, there is however also

47   much debate surrounding the concept of social justice. The underpinning aims of much social

48   justice research are to examine issues surrounding fairness, discrimination and social injustice

49   within society. There is often an underlying ideological desire to change and improve the

50   social world and strive for greater equality and distribution of opportunities, benefits and

51 responsibilities for different people and groups through activism and praxis (Long, Fletcher,

52 & Watson, 2017; Riches et al., 2017; Wetherly, Watson, & Long, 2017). For some social

53 justice researchers, the world should be examined through a 'politics of hope' that 'criticizes

54 the status quo and imagines how things *could* be different' (Trussell, 2014, p.350, cited in

55 Riches et al., 2017, p.218; emphasis added by Riches et al.). The concept of social justice can

56 be heavily value-laden in striving to improve the situation for disadvantaged groups within

57 society. In the field of education, social justice agendas can broadly be seen as a call for

58 critical theorists and educators to engage and respond to the detrimental effects of

59 globalization on issues of equity and diversity within increasingly neo-liberal educational

60 practices (Azzarito et al., 2017).

61   The aim of this position statement is to offer a figurational sociological approach as a

62 means of understanding issues relating to bullying in school-based Physical Education (PE).

63 Malcolm and Mansfield (2013, pp.399-400) have summarized the key underpinning

64 principles of figurational sociology as follows:

65   (1) human societies can only be understood in terms of long-term processes of

66   change; (2) human life is characterised by interdependent relations which are

67   diverse and shifting and underpinned by ever-changing balances of power; (3)

68   human societies are characterized by different degrees of, and a dynamic

69   interplay between, internal and external social controls, with the increasing

70   internalisation of the latter in relatively complex societies; (4) human acts involve

71   processes in which intentional action contributes to unintended or unplanned

72   patterns of relationships; (5) social life is characterised by balances and blends of

73   emotional involvement in and detachment from the contexts in which human

74   beings find themselves.

75 In this position statement, we provide a figurationally-informed synthesis of key themes

76 relating to issues of bullying in PE and begin to offer a critical reflection on recent attempts

77 to label bullying amongst young people as a social justice issue. The more ideologically-

78 driven focus and occasional political involvements of some social justice researchers can, at

79 times, guide such research from the outset, leading such researchers to examine problems,

80 troubles and issues of the day from a more involved short-term perspective. Figurational

81 sociologists argue that examining social processes from a long-term developmental

82 perspective can aid in the development of more detached forms of knowledge (Dunning,

83 1992).

84

85 **PE, gender and bullying: A long-term perspective**

86 Figurational sociologists argue that a developmental approach in the research process can

87 facilitate a more adequate understanding of the long-term power-struggles that often underpin

88 social inequalities and unequal power-chances for different people and groups within society

89 (Elias, 1978). Elias (1978) argued, this can allow sociologists to consider how people's

90 actions are enabled or constrained through their interdependence with others. Historically, PE

91 has long been a gendered subject, particularly given that PE has (and often continues to be)

92 viewed synonymously with sport. At the time of the emergence of modern sport during the

93 18th and 19th centuries, gender relations between men and women were vastly unequal in

94 politics, education and public space. Sport was largely a male preserve, a social institution

95 honoured, demarcated and both organizationally and ideologically dominated by males.

96   Various modern forms of sport/PE started to emerge and develop in the male public

97 schools of the 18th and 19th centuries (Dunning & Sheard, 2005). Sport was an activity that

98 was seen to enhance Victorian ideals of masculinity. The development of masculine ideals

99 within public schools was linked, in part, to the widespread occurrence of bullying in early

100   forms of PE, often linked to greater power-chances for older and/or stronger boys (Dunning

101   & Sheard, 2005). The levels of physical violence that took place between pupils can appear

102   somewhat severe and, at times, brutal when examined from a more modern-day perspective.

103   However, these levels of violence were legitimized through the emerging prefect-fagging

104   system, which was implemented to maintain power imbalances, control and hierarchies both

105   between teachers and pupils and amongst the young males themselves (Dunning & Sheard,

106   2005). This experience was even considered by many teachers and parents at the time as an

107   important aspect of character development for instilling 'manliness' amongst male pupils

108   (Dunning & Sheard, 2005).

109   In the late nineteenth century, the emergence of public schools for middle-class and

110   upper-class girls involved physical activities that took place away from public view, behind

111   closed doors (Hargreaves, 1994). Whilst contributing to the tendency to omit female

112   participation from the history of early forms of modern sport, this provided an enabling

113   female-only space where more male-dominated sports and activities – including sports like

114   cricket – could be played (Velija, 2015). There was nonetheless still an expectation that

115   girls/women who were playing sport within public schools would adhere to strict behavioural

116   codes that emphasized notions of femininity, thus posing no direct challenge to the

117   dominance of male sport (McCrone 1998).

118   In the intervening period, there have been important changes in gender relations

119   during the course of the 20th century. In line with broader civilizing processes and ongoing

120   long-term power-struggles, the diminishing focus on manual labour work and women's

121   growing access to social, political and educational spheres have contributed to gradual

122   processes of functional democratization (equalizing trends) between the sexes (Liston, 2018).

123   However, sport remains an area in which gendered power relations remain unequal;

124   something that also still remains evident in the design and delivery of PE in schools. In the

125   UK, young people are involved in physical activity through the formal PE curriculum as well

126   as extracurricular opportunities. Despite this, girls tend to be less physically active both in

127   and out of school settings (Green, 2010). The recent co-authored Youth Sport Trust and

128   Women in Sport survey (2017) reports that 71% of boys compared with 56% of girls enjoy

129   and are happy with the amount of physical activity in which they take part. This is despite the

130   introduction of the 1992 National Curriculum in England and Wales for all children in state

131   schools, which was intended to equalize the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

132   The national curriculum is compulsory for all pupils and was partially designed to be

133   inclusive, yet to some extent, the gendered nature of the NCPE contributes to negative

134   experiences for girls and does not inspire lifelong participation. A critical perspective from

135   the outset expressed concern about: (1) the emphasis on games; (2) the optional nature of

136   dance; and (3) the place of outdoor education (Penney, 2002). The continued dominance of

137   games over other forms of physical activity has implications for gender equity for two

138   reasons, namely, that the content of games in PE have been most persistently associated with

139   sex differentiated provision and that the delivery of these activities has been most closely

140   associated with gendered patterns (Penney, 2002). Today, PE continues to be a subject area in

141   which dominant gender ideologies are socially constructed by teachers delivering the

142   curriculum and by pupils, who often begin their experiences of PE with notions of gender and

143   sport that, in many instances, are already fairly established (Williams & Bedward, 2002).

144   Another important development in schooling during the course of the 20th century, to

145   the present day, has seen long-term changes and/or increasing concerns regarding instances

146   of bullying. Such developments are indicative of long-term and complex interweaving

147   civilizing processes, in which people's sensitivities to instances of violence (as well as other

148   forms of behaviour that were considered to transgress expected social norms) have become

149   increasingly heightened (Elias, 2000). With gradual trends towards more civilized forms of

150 behaviour – in which greater levels of self-control were increasingly expected and required

151 from people in many areas of social life – being labelled 'a bully' has, over time, increasingly

152 tended to elicit feelings of shame and embarrassment. This is not to suggest that bullying in

153 and of itself has decreased, but people's perceptions of (and attitudes towards) bullying has

154 changed over time. The gradual growing levels of repugnance towards physical aggression

155 offers one explanation for why there is now a greater variation in the types of bullying, which

156 now tends to be more verbal or indirect through forms of social exclusion and gossiping.

157 Along with the emergence of cyber-bullying, these forms of bullying are also more pervasive,

158 as they are harder to escape from, detect and regulate. Equally, a consequence of long-term

159 civilizing processes is that, within schools, young people are increasingly expected to respect

160 the feelings of others and exercise foresight into the consequences of their actions, or at least

161 refrain from verbal or physical conflict. However, young people are involved in increasing

162 complex networks of interdependencies which involve tension-balances and power-relations

163 which are always in flux. Part of their individual civilizing process (becoming more rational)

164 therefore involves learning to relate with others in a socially acceptable manner and

165 internalise a growing number of behavioural polices, such as school's behaviour and anti-

166 bullying policies.

167

168 **Gender-based 'bullying' and 'space' in secondary PE**

169 In the UK, young people often only experience PE classes for up to two hours per week,

170 although this can be expanded if they engage in school sport and extra-curricular activities.

171 Whilst minimal, this time has been considered pivotal in young people's understanding,

172 development and expression of gender (Connell, 2008). Most primary schools in England

173 include mixed-sex PE lessons, whilst PE in most secondary schools is single-sex with a

174 same-sex teacher. Noret et al.'s (2015) four-year study of 15,023 young people at primary

175 and secondary schools in England provided sex-variance data regarding the occurrence of

176 bullying in single-sex PE environments. They found that an equal proportion of secondary

177 school young males and young females reported being bullied because they are good at sport,

178 a finding that somewhat contradicts the more common assumption that being good at sport

179 offers males, in particular, kudos amongst their peers. However, they also found that more

180 young males reported being bullied because they are not good at sport, a finding that aligns

181 more with established notions relating to cultural ideas and stigma of gayness, effeminacy

182 and physical weakness.

183 Often synonymous with competitive sport, secondary school PE often values and

184 indeed celebrates traditional masculine ideals of strength, power, physicality and skill

185 (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Therefore, with few other spaces in school normalizing,

186 accepting and, at times, rewarding masculinized cultures, some young males experience a

187 gendered pleasurable excitement in male PE (Gerdin, 2017). However, young males'

188 attempts and necessity to embody this value-system inevitably creates a hierarchy premised

189 on 'those who can' and 'those who can't'. The visual nature of the power discrepancies

190 derived from this process can present opportunities for some young males to ridicule and

191 bully others (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). For some dominant young males, the

192 pleasurable excitement that they experience in PE is informed by their dominance over

193 certain 'weaker' peers.

194 Whilst the severity of physical aggression may have diminished in schools in line

195 with long-term civilizing trends, the highly visible external body in PE means that feelings of

196 embarrassment and humiliation in relation to young people's physical ability/competence has

197 arguably increased. These feelings and power imbalances between young males are often

198 highlighted and maintained through gendered peer-commentary e.g. 'you bunch of girls',

199 'you throw like a girl'. One increasingly popular means by which pupils engage in more

200   indirect verbal forms of bullying is through the guise of 'banter'. Banter has become

201   synonymous with 'lads' and is often associated with sport settings. Banter seems to have

202   risen in popularity as a term to explain and excuse language which is on the margins of

203   acceptance (Nichols, 2018). Viewing banter from a long-term developmental perspective, the

204   term, and its use, could be understood in response to certain males' resistance to the

205   perceived restriction on certain masculine habitus and concerns with the increasing

206   feminization of society.

207   Changing rooms have often been identified as a particularly prominent space for

208   bullying in school PE (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). Irrespective of the rise of co-educational

209   PE, during secondary school, young people get changed in single-sex changing rooms. This

210   single-sex space has been described as a 'hidden' gendered curriculum whereby some young

211   males face 'ritual (and indeed, systematic) bullying and humiliation' (Atkinson & Kehler,

212   2012, p.166). Young males' narratives of changing room cultures recall tormenting, verbal

213   abuse, physical confrontation and outright violence (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). Of note here

214   is that these bullying relations take place in a space often devoid of adult presence, largely

215   due to teachers' perceptions of youth privacy and fears of being accused of breaching child

216   safeguarding procedures (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). Without a key authoritative figure,

217   certain young males have been able to exercise their power advantages over perceived

218   weaker peers in this confined space, at times making PE a 'chilly' and 'toxic' environment

219   for other male pupils (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012, p.166).

220   The issues that pupils experience within the changing room environment can be

221   explained in relation to broader long-term civilizing processes. Elias (2000) argued that, over

222   time, the naked body has gradually come to be associated with heightened levels of shame

223   and embarrassment, and thus, has become increasingly pushed behind the scenes of public

224   life. The process of changing from school uniform to PE kit therefore publicizes an otherwise

225   private experience. Young people's mandatory exposure of their semi-naked bodies to peers,

226   for whom they may or may not have established relations based on friendship and respect,

227   comes at a pivotal time during their development of body consciousness and gender identity.

228   This process is further impacted by modern sensibilities concerning adults' surveillance of

229   young peoples' semi-naked bodies, meaning that despite their professional status, teachers

230   minimize their entry to changing rooms. One unintended outcome of such modern

231   sensibilities is the provision of opportunities for undetected bullying.

232

233   **Power-relations in PE and everyday interpretations of 'bullying'**

234   Green (2003) has argued that there is a tendency to reify PE, that is, to conceptualize it as an

235   entity in and of itself. However, we must not forget that PE is inherently a social construct,

236   one that is co-constructed by teachers and young people (Green, 2003). One way to avoid

237   reifying PE is to consider PE as a figuration, 'a structure of mutually oriented and dependent

238   people' (Elias, 1978, p.261). Adopting this sensitizing research tool helps to place human

239   relations at the centre of any PE-related conceptualizations. In secondary PE in England,

240   mutuality is created through the mandatory nature of the subject, whereby young people are

241   usually categorized by gender and ability-sets. Therefore, young people's relationships with

242   peers may include 'new' relations with peers who are not usually in their other classes.

243   PE teachers are pivotal in the PE experience and young people often consider them as

244   role models for the promotion of caring peer-relations (Gano-Overway, 2013; Smith & St.

245   Pierre, 2009). However, media portrayals regularly depict PE teachers as drill

246   sergeants/bullies, whose harsh authoritarian pedagogies fail to create inclusive environments

247   (McCullick et al. 2003). There is some evidence that PE teachers can be complicit in

248   normalizing behaviours usually deemed as bullying in other facets of school, as well as

249   promoting and engaging in bullying relations between young people. For example, O'Connor

and Graber (2014) found that male and female PE teachers acculturated a bullying climate by, amongst other things, promoting aggression and violence through implementing inappropriate curricular selections. Some PE teachers even perpetuated peer-ridicule through sarcastic comments or mocking demonstrations of poor skills (O'Connor & Graber, 2014).

At the centre of this teacher-pupil relationship was a discrepancy between banter and verbal bullying, which illustrates, amongst other things, differing adult-child sensibilities to commentary based on difference and levels of offense caused. The difference between adult and child interpretations causes further tensions when PE teachers are tasked to adopt a whole-school universal anti-bullying policy. Despite expressing desires to combat bullying, previous research has shown that PE teachers held little knowledge of their school's anti-bullying policies and adopted diverse strategies of dealing with bullying, which included verbal put-downs and making light of the situation (O'Connor & Graber, 2014). The normalization of jocular interactions in PE is further evidenced by young people reporting PE teachers as present in 55% of peer-teasing incidents, but recalling that teachers ignored it, brushed it off, or, on some occasions, laughed at crude peer-comments (Li & Rukavina, 2012). Other teacher interventions included telling victims to ignore comments or avoid perpetrators (Li & Rukavina, 2012). Adding further weight to claims of a normalization of verbal teasing/bullying in PE, researchers observed and young people reported that PE teachers were more likely to intervene in incidents of physical bullying compared to verbal bullying, resulting in many young people expressing how they felt that their teachers did not care about bullying (Li & Rukavina, 2012).

A further concern with teacher-pupil relations was the perceived inequality within these relations. PE teachers' use of banter involved certain young people within the class and not others. Some young males bemoaned teacher-pupil bonding, which they perceived as teacher favouritism (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). These young males recounted how their male

275   PE teachers bonded with their perceived sporty peers through what they perceived as over-

276   praising and regularly joking with them, whilst 'non-sporty' males received negative

277   feedback and were mocked or neglected by male PE teachers (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012).

278   This level of favouritism was cited by some young males as a contributory factor for why

279   they or their peers failed to intervene and/or report instances of bullying as victims or

280   bystanders (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012).

281   The findings presented here illustrate a generational divide between teachers and

282   young people's interpretation of socially acceptable and inappropriate behaviours. PE

283   teachers have a significant power advantage in the PE figuration due to their status as adults

284   and professional teachers. Therefore, as described here, they play a significant role in the

285   normalization and everyday perceptions of bullying and banter in PE. Power-relations in PE

286   are not fixed or static, but should be considered as a series of shifting tension-balances. For

287   instance, the influence of PE over young people may differ depending on their level of

288   experience, teaching approach or the age of pupils in the PE class. Equally, whilst historically

289   PE teachers appeared to benefit from greater power chances through authoritarian teaching

290   pedagogies that created a clear power hierarchy between them and young people, accounts of

291   young people bullying teachers suggests that power-relations between the two can or are

292   shifting to a more negotiated position (Espinoza, 2015). This apparent shift in teacher-pupil

293   relations can be explained through broader shifts in power-relations between adults-children

294   that have taken place as consequences of long-term civilizing processes, a process that Elias

295   (1978) referred to as functional democratization.

296   As co-constructers of PE, young people and their relations need to be considered in

297   their own right. The literature on bullying in PE suggests that bullying almost always takes

298   place within a peer-group setting and is more likely to be verbal than physical. One example

299   of this is Symons et al. (2014) study of 536 young people, including 399 self-identified same-

300   sex attracted and gender diverse youth, who found that 20% of young people encountered

301   physical abuse in PE (shoved, pushed, etc.) compared to 32.3% who indicated that they were

302   verbally abused (name calling, threats, etc.) at least semi-regularly (sometimes, often or

303   frequently). Comparatively, Hurley and Mandigo (2010) found that 11.6% of young people

304   reported being physically bullied, whilst 13.6% experienced verbal bullying. The difference

305   in variance between these studies may be linked to differences in sample characteristics and

306   mixed-sex and single-sex class dynamic. Verbal and social bullying (exclusion and

307   gossiping) amongst young people was centred on perceived differences, primarily in

308   appearance and physical competency (Hurley & Mandigo, 2010). Specifically, young people

309   cited appearance-based differences as including body-size, personal attire, personal

310   characteristics (such as hairstyle) and perceived lack of attractiveness (Hurley & Mandigo,

311   2010). It was often young people lacking in physical competency, based on sporting skill and

312   athletic ability, that were bullied, but there were some instances reported whereby those

313   highly skilled were bullied (Hurley & Mandigo, 2010).

314   As demonstrated, due to de-routinized practices and more informalized relations and

315   behavioural norms, PE differs somewhat to other classroom-based subjects. These

316   behavioural norms inform those involved perceptions of banter and bullying within PE,

317   which can differ between and within the two social groups (teachers and pupils) and lead to

318   school anti-bullying policies not being implemented. The informality of PE/sport spaces

319   (whereby the use of banter may resist the more rigid forms of civilized restraint that are more

320   common in classrooms) means that young people are confronted with a need to be able to

321   'do', 'take' and 'not perceive' banter as verbal bullying. Therefore, the normalization of

322   physicality and verbal jousting in PE helps to explain relationally-informed subject-specific

323   interpretations of bullying in PE and discrepancies between those individuals involved. In

324 these more informalized settings, certain behaviours become normalized and exploitation of

325 socially constructed power differentials by some young people can go unpunished.

326

327 **Why adopt a figurational approach to bullying in school sport and PE?**

328 This position statement has argued that PE is an environment whereby everyday

329 interpretations of 'bullying' are less heightened than those in other facets of schooling. In this

330 sense, we agree with Rivers's (2010) call that school-based research needs to be more

331 subject-specific in order to gain a greater situational understanding of bullying. By focusing

332 on figurational dynamics within broader figurations, a figurational approach helps avoid

333 generalized conceptions of bullying in schools. It also helps emphasize the need to consider

334 the sub-cultural variances between and within different social groups, as well as key

335 contributory factors such as gender and sexuality and, although not discussed here, issues of

336 race, dis-ability and class. The following discussion expands on how a figurational

337 perspective can be used to understand the issue of bullying in PE.

338   A long-term processual approach helps provide a more detached account of bullying,

339 which is necessary to better rationalize and understand how such conceptions and emotional

340 attachment towards bullying came to be as well as contextualizing long-term changing

341 perceptions of what constitutes 'bullying' in different eras and appreciating that such issues

342 remain dynamic. Whilst definitional notions of repetition and intent will remain subjective,

343 focusing on flux asymmetrical power imbalances helps to understand how and why bullying

344 in PE may take place. It is from this position that we are able to better consider means of

345 addressing significant power differentials that underpin bullying, and not get tied to or

346 embroiled in definitional clarity or issues.

347   A long-term processual understanding of human-relations also helps identify the

348 'sociological inheritance' (Elias, 2000) that young people have to embody as part of their

349   individual civilizing process. This process refers to a period of socialization in which issues

350   of self and external restraint are shifting, whereby young people are increasingly expected to

351   refrain from emotional outburst (physically and, increasingly, verbally). Increasing levels of

352   behavioural and emotional refinements reflect changing power relations in which societies

353   with relatively tight-knit networks of interdependencies and relatively strong mutual

354   identification and mutually expected self-restraint is required (van Stolk & Wouters, 1987).

355   These relations are no less constraining than previously. If anything, they require greater

356   levels of mutual identification and self-restraint from young people, a process which

357   demonstrates the complexity of modern relations and self-restraint. For instance, we have

358   referred to how young people are challenged to identify and understand what banter is and

359   what verbal bullying is, whilst simultaneously having to interpret when peers (and teachers)

360   are adopting banter rather than verbal bullying. These complex emotions and relations with

361   others demonstrate the demands on young people to learn to restrain their thoughts and

362   behaviours in ever more complex socialization process. Helping young people to understand

363   their relations with others, as well as power imbalances and their 'figurations', may enable

364   them to better understand their emotions, and their emotional responses to others.

365   Given these increasing complex processes of socialization there has been an extension

366   of the notion of youth, epitomized through the introduction of mandatory schooling until

367   eighteen in the UK, whereby young people have longer to develop emotional self-control.

368   Linked to this, in discussing the hinge, Elias emphasizes how the physical body and self-

369   regulation are interwoven with learned mechanisms that emerge at different points in time

370   (Atkinson, 2012). The hinge is introduced by Elias to challenge the nature-nurture dualism

371   and convey a relationship which heightens our awareness that the two are fundamentally

372   linked and could not exist in separation (Velija & Malcolm, 2018). *The Civilizing Process*

373   can be viewed as a case study of the hinge, 'illustrating how self-restraint is partially an

374   unlearned human drive, but forged in relation to changing, more interdependent, pacified,

375   centralized and functionally democratic environments' (Atkinson 2012, p.55). Considering

376   the relation between learned and unlearned behaviours may enable young people to

377   deconstruct gendered elements in PE and challenge these. This would require PE teachers to

378   be able to do this and thus challenge their views and occupational/gendered habitus in which

379   they consider gender to be biologically fixed and do not question these taken for granted

380   assumptions which continue to separate boys and girls in PE, drawing on established ideas

381   about the capabilities of male and female bodies.

382   A relational approach not only helps with historical to modern comparisons, as

383   mentioned above, but also helps us to consider how bullying is often: (a) manifested

384   differently within different educational settings; (b) relationally conceptualized along socially

385   constructed behaviours deemed 'acceptable'; and (c) determined through adult eyes and

386   heavily influenced by adult norms. Linked to this, a relational approach also helps

387   encapsulate the increasing speed of change in more modern societies within acceptable adult

388   and child behaviours, alongside broader changes in adult-child and gender relations, over the

389   last few decades, which can offer a more detached understanding of what a short-term

390   perspective may consider as fixed, static and inappropriate teacher conduct and teacher-pupil

391   relations.

392   The positioning of bullying in schools as a social justice issue is, in itself, not

393   surprizing and can be broadly understood as a reflection on changing adult and child

394   relations, the emotive response to children in distress, increasing constraints on parents and

395   parenting styles, teaching styles, and broader changes in education, which prioritize research

396   agendas that have impact. However, the two are not as mutually exclusive as they may seem,

397   as a researcher can contribute to knowledge and understanding and be concerned with social

398   issues (or social justice). However, the method for doing so may differ. As Dunning (1999,

399 p.9; original emphasis) has noted, a 'concern with relatively detached understanding has to be

400 tempered by a motivating and familiarity-conferring *involvement*' which, amongst other

401 things, assists in understanding the experiences and views people express about their

402 situations and life worlds. We echo the work of Smith et al. (2018) here to say that whilst our

403 concerns might indeed be primarily academic, namely to develop a relatively detached

404 understanding of bullying, this is needed to develop a relatively detached understanding for

405 the development of more effective short-term and long-term policy formation and enactment.

406 Future research should concentrate on the workings of power within PE and figurational

407 dynamics and dominant social processes that enable the development and maintenance of

408 significant power imbalances between young people in PE.

409

410 **References**

411 Anti-Bullying Alliance (2018). *Anti-Bullying Week*. Retrieved from: https://www.anti-
412 bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week

413 Atkinson, M., & Kehler, M. (2012). Boys, Bullying and Biopedagogies in Physical
414 Education. *THYMOS: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, *6*(2), 166-185.

415 Atkinson, M. (2012). Norbert Elias and the Body. In B. S. Turner (Ed.), *The Routledge
416 Handbook of the Body* (pp. 49-61). London, England: Routledge.

417 Azzarito, L., Macdonald, D., Dagkas, S., & Fisette, J. (2017). Revitalizing the physical
418 education social-justice agenda in the global era: Where do we go from here? *Quest*,
419 *69*(2), 205-219.

420 Brauser, D. (2014). *'Striking' Impact of Bullying on Teens' Mental, Physical Health*.
421 Retrieved from: https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/820828

422 Bloyce, D., & Smith, A. (2010). *Sport Policy and Development: An Introduction*. Abingdon,
423 England: Routledge.

424   Connell, R. (2008). Masculinity construction and sports in boys' education: A framework for

425   thinking about the issue. *Sport, Education and Society*, *13*(2), 131-145.

426   Department for Education (2017). *Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers,*

427   *staff and governing bodies*. July, 1-19.Retrieved from:

428   https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data

429   /file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf [09/08/2018]

430   DitchTheLabel   (2018).   *The   Annual   Bullying   Survey   2018*.   Retrieved   from:

431   https://www.ditchthelabel.org/research-papers/the-annual-bullying-survey-2018/

432   Dunning, E. (1992). Figurational Sociology and the Sociology of Sport: Some Concluding

433   Remarks. In E. Dunning & C. Rojek (Eds.), *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing*

434   *Process: Critique and Counter-Critique* (pp. 221-284). Basingstoke, England:

435   MacMillan.

436   Dunning, E. (1999). *Sport Matters: Sociological studies of Sport, Violence and Civilisation*.

437   London, England: Routledge.

438   Dunning, E., & Sheard, K. (2005). *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study*

439   *of the Development of Rugby Football* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

440   Elias, N. (1978). *What is Sociology?* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

441   Elias, N. (2000). *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*.

442   Oxford, England: Blackwell.

443   Espinoza, J. (2015). *Schools 'failing to expel students who bully teachers' as verbal abuse in*

444   *the   classroom   soars   by   a   third*.   Retrieved   from:

445   https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11513868/Schools-failing-to-

446   expel-students-who-bully-teachers-as-verbal-abuse-in-the-classroom-soars-by-a-

447   third.html

448   Gano-Overway, L. A. (2013). Exploring the connections between caring and social behaviors
449   in physical education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *84*(1), 104-114.

450   Gerdin, G. (2017). *Boys, Bodies, and Physical Education: Problematizing Identity,*
451   *Schooling, and Power Relations Through a Pleasure Lens*. London, England: Taylor
452   and Francis.

453   GOV.UK (2018). *Bullying at School*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school

454   Green, K. (2003). *Physical education teachers on physical education: A sociological study of*
455   *philosophies and ideologies*. Chester, England: Chester Academic Press.

456   Green, K. (2010). *Key Themes in Youth Sport*. London, England: Routledge.

457   Hargreaves, J. (1994) *Sporting Females: critical issues in the history and sociology of*
458   *women's sport*. London: Routledge

459   Hurley, V., & Mandigo, J. (2010). Bullying in Physical Education: Its Prevalence and Impact
460   on the Intention to Continue Secondary School Physical Education. *PHENex Journal*,
461   *2*(3), 1-19.

462   Li, W., & Rukavina, P. (2012). The Nature, Occurring Contexts, and Psychological
463   Implications of Weight-Related Teasing in Urban Physical Education Programs.
464   *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *83*(2), 308-317.

465   Liston, K. (2018). Norbert Elias, Figurational Sociology and Feminisms. In L. Mansfield, J.
466   Caudwell, B. Wheaton & B. Watson (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and*
467   *Sport, Leisure and Physical Education* (pp. 357-373). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave
468   MacMillian.

469   Long, J., Fletcher, T., & Watson, B. (2017). Introducing Sport, Leisure and Social Justice. In
470   J. Long, T. Fletcher & B. Watson (Eds.), *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice* (pp. 1-14).
471   Abingdon, England: Routledge.

472 Malcolm, D., & Mansfield, L. (2013). The quest for exciting knowledge: Developments in
473   figurational sociological research on sport and leisure. *Politica y Sociedad*, *50*(2), 397-
474   419.

475 McCrone, K. (1988) *Playing the game: Sport and the emancipation of English women 1870-*
476   *1914*. Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky.

477 McCullick, B., Belcher, D., Hardin, B., & Hardin, M. (2003). Butches, bullies and buffoons:
478   Images of physical education teachers in the movies. *Sport, Education and Society*,
479   *8*(1), 3-16.

480 Nichols, K. (2018). Moving beyond ideas of laddism: Conceptualising 'mischievous
481   masculinities' as a new way of understanding everyday sexism and gender relations.
482   *Journal of Gender Studies*, *27*(1), 73-85.

483 Noret, N., Smith, A., Birbeck, N., Velija, P., & Mierzwinski, M. (2015). *Bullying in School*
484   *Sport: Report Provided for the Ben Cohen Foundation*. Retrieved from:
485   https://ray.yorksj.ac.uk/id/eprint/1010/1/Cohen%20Final%20Report.pdf

486 O'Connor, J. A., & Graber, K. C. (2014). Sixth-Grade Physical Education: An Acculturation
487   of Bullying and Fear. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *85*(3), 398-408.

488 Payne, S., & Keenan, S. (2016). *Stop Child Torment*. Retrieved from:
489   https://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/710088/stop-child-torment/

490 Penney, D. (Ed.). (2002). *Gender and physical education: Contemporary issues and future*
491   *directions*. London, England: Routledge.

492 Polanin, M., & Vera, E. (2013). Bullying Prevention and Social Justice. *Theory into Practice*,
493   *52*(4), 303-310.

494 Riches, G., Rankin-Wright, A. J., Swain, S., & Kuppan, V. (2017). Moving Forward: Critical
495   Reflections on Doing Social Justice Research. In J. Long, T. Fletcher & B. Watson

496   (Eds.), *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice* (pp. 209-221). Abingdon, England:

497   Routledge.

498   Rigby, K., Smith, P. K. & Pepler, D. (2004). Working to Prevent School Bullying: Key

499   Issues. In P. K. Smith, D. Pepler & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in Schools: How*

500   *Successful Can Interventions Be?* (pp. 1-12). Cambridge, England: Cambridge

501   University Press.

502   Rivers, I. (2010). Bullying, homophobia and transphobia in sport: At what cost

503   discrimination? In C. H. Brackenridge & D. Rhind (Eds.), *Elite child athlete welfare:*

504   *International perspectives* (pp. 80-84). London, England: Brunel University Press.

505   Smith, M. A., & St. Pierre, P. (2009). Secondary students' perceptions of enjoyment in

506   physical education: an American and English perspective. *Physical Education*, *66*,

507   209-222.

508   Smith, R. (2014). *Bullying at school affects health 40 years later*. Retrieved from:

509   https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/children/10772302/Bullying-at-school-

510   affects-health-40-years-later.html

511   Smith, A. & Bloyce, D. (2018) Sports Policy, Sport Development and Figurational

512   Sociology. In: D. Malcolm & P. Velija (Eds.) *Figurational Research in Sport, Leisure*

513   *and Health* (no pp). London, Routledge.

514   Stonewall (2017). *School Report 2017*. Retrieved from: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-

515   report-2017

516   Symons, C., O'Sullivan, G., Borkoles, E., Anderson, M. B., & Polman, R. C. J. (2014). *The*

517   *Impact of Homophobic Bullying during Sport and Physical Education Participation*

518   *on Same-Sex-Attracted and Gender-Diverse Young Australians' Depression and*

519   *Anxiety Levels: "The Equal Play Study"*. Melbourne, Australia: Victoria University.

520   Tischler, A., & McCaughtry, N. (2011). PE is Not for Me: When Boys' Masculinities are

521   Threatened. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *82*(1), 37-48.

522   van Stolk, B., & Wouters, C. (1987). Power changes and self-respect: A comparison of two

523   cases of established-outsider relations. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *4*(2-3), 477-488.

524   Velija, P. (2015) *Women's Cricket and Global Process. The Emergence and Development of

525   Women's Cricket as a Global Sport*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

526   Volk, A. A., Dane, A. V., & Marini, Z. A. (2014). What is bullying? A theoretical re-

527   definition. *Developmental Review*, 34, 327-343.

528   Volk, A. A., Veenstra, R., & Espelage, D. L. (2017). So you want to study bullying?

529   Recommendations to enhance the validity, transparency, and compatibility of bullying

530   research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *36*, 34-43.

531   Velija, P., & Malcolm, D. (2018). Introduction to Figurational Research in Sport, Leisure and

532   Health. In D. Malcolm & P. Velija (Eds.) *Figurational Research in Sport, Leisure and

533   Health* (no pp.). London, England: Routledge.

534   Youth Sport Trust (2017) Girls Active Research. Retrieved from:

535   https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news/survey-shows-large-gender-gap-attitudes-physical-

536   activity-teenagers [09/08/2018]

537   Wetherly, P., Watson, B., & Long, J. (2017). Principles of Social Justice for Sport and

538   Leisure. In J. Long, T. Fletcher & B. Watson (Eds.), *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice*

539   (pp. 1-14). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

540   Williams, A., & Bedward, J. (2002). Understanding girls' experience of physical education:

541   relational analysis and situated learning. In D. Penney (Ed.), *Gender and physical

542   education: contemporary issues and future directions* (pp. 146-159). London,

543   England: Routledge.